THE SECOND DAY.

13th February 1917.

The Assembly met at 11-30 A. M. on Tuesday, the 13th February 1917.

The Chief Secretary to Government announced that His Highness the Maha Rajah has been pleased to approve of the election of Mr. A. Govinda Menon, B. A., and Mr. M. Subramania Pillai, the Members of the Kottayam and Padmanabhapuram Divisions respectively, and that they will be duly appointed Members of the Legislative Council.

The consideration of the subjects, as per the list distributed to the Members on the previous day, was begun.

I.—FINANCE.

1. Creation of an Efficiency Audit Department.

Mr. K. C. Mamman Mappila, *B. A.* (Member, Nominated) began by stating that no Government in the world was perfect and that even the most progressive countries found the needs of the community outstripping the improvements in the machinery of Government. He recommended a periodical overhauling lest Government should become thoroughly unsuited and unpopular. It was years since any attempt at a comprehensive reorganisation on large and far-seeing lines had been attempted in Travancore since the days of Col. Munro, Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao and Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, C. I. E. In the case of Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, during his all-too-brief period, he was able to take up only a few questions out of the many which were clamouring for attention. Therefore, a cursory examination or superficial consideration would reveal several points which required thorough reorganization or radical alteration. If there had been a regular machinery for continuously oiling the wheels and replacing the worn-out parts, the administration would have been far more efficient and more conducive to the welfare of the people. What had to be kept in mind was, therefore, to bring the administrative machinery into an up-to-date and business-like condition and also to provide sufficient means for the people to co-operate with the Government in the promotion of the country's welfare. He mentioned two outstanding features of the present administration—*viz.*, the remarkable progress made in education and the endeavours made to bring about the economic development of the country. The policy adopted in regard to education had roused the people to renewed activity, the result being write large in the progress of education during the past 2 or 3 years. After dealing with the details of this progress, the Member made eulogistic allusion to the recent measure taken by Government by which an industrial side had been introduced into the Elementary Schools of the State. Travancore, he added, was incomparably superior to what it was in years gone by. Still, it had to be said that the organization of Government was behind the times, that the material resources of the State were not being properly developed, that the distribution of funds for various purposes was inequitable, that the people were not getting back their money's worth, and that individual officials were not made sufficiently alive to the imperative necessity of giving their very best to the public good. He then reviewed the working of the various branches of the State Service. Taking the Huzur Cutcherry first, he described the state of affairs before the advent of Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, C. I. E., as Dewan and observed that the Secretariat reform introduced by him had done a world of improvement.

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Still, the defect lay in the system which imposed on the Head of the Administration *viz.*, the Dewan, an amount of work and responsibility which was, humanly speaking, impossible for even a prodigy to carry out to one's own satisfaction. Every scrap of paper had to go to the Dewan for orders. The suggestion of the Member was the creation of a Council to advise the Dewan in all matters connected with the administration of the State. As an alternative, he proposed that three or four Secretaries, with better status and pay, might be appointed and invested with enlarged powers to enable them to dispose of all routine matters. This method of work, if carried out, would give the Head of the Administration and the higher officers of the Secretariat more time for the consideration of larger questions of policy and reorganization.

Another matter in which reform was advocated was the abolition of the present dual system under which the office of the Financial Secretary and that of the Chief Account Officer were merged in the same individual.

The Member then passed on to a reorganization of the Land Revenue Department. At present, the Dewan was practically the Head of the Land Revenue Department. Along with his other onerous duties, it could not be expected that the working of this department would be as satisfactory as one would wish, especially in view of the fact that the Land Revenue Department was so closely associated with the material prosperity of the ryot. When such other branches of the Service as the Engineering, Education, Registration, Police, Forest, Medical, &c., had their own officers to guide and control the work assigned to them, it was strange that the most important one, the Revenue Department, should have no independent head. The creation of a Revenue Commissionership was, therefore, urged, together with a re-arrangement of the system under which Dewan Peishkars were to be replaced by Deputy Peishkars. Another benefit claimed for the change proposed was that, as a consequence, the separation of the Devaswom Department could be carried into effect. Such a separation would enable the authorities to admit, without any unnecessary restriction, all classes of His Highness' subjects into the revenue line—a matter which had been a subject of grievance for a large section of the people for some time past. It could not be contended, the Member continued, that the management of the Devaswom or Revenue Department would be the less efficient or satisfactory for the admission of people who were now excluded from it. Mysore and Cochin were examples to follow in that matter. The Member then submitted that the request made by him be granted as a *Shashtipurthi* boon of His Highness the Maha Rajah.

The Member then proceeded to examine the methods of work in the Division and Taluk Offices and pleaded for the introduction therein of the system of Secretariat work in a miniature form. In speaking of similar work in villages, the Member referred, in complimentary terms, to the changes effected as a result of the procedure laid down in the Land Revenue Manual and hoped that, when the Land Revenue Manual came into full operation in the whole State, there would be far less confusion. Here again, the Member suggested that the solution of all the difficulties he pointed out lay in the creation of a Revenue Commissioner.

Taking other departments one by one, the Member drew the attention of Government to the working of the Excise Department which, he said, required looking into. Excise Inspectors were making Rs. 500 and Rs. 600 a month by allowing arrack and toddy shops to be opened in places where they had no right to exist. He explained in detail what he thought to be the irregularities of the department.

The Dewan enquired of the Member what change in the *system* he would advocate, to eradicate the evils mentioned.

The Member replied that he had not thought out any.

Continuing, the Member took up the Police Department next and said that several Circle Inspectors did not deserve the position they now held. Some of them were a source of trouble, inconvenience and vexation to the people. He suggested that it would be better to associate a few responsible and respectable non-officials in the mofussil with the work of the Police.

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Touching the Education Department, it was the Member's view that, constituted as it was at present, it would not work smoothly. The staff for control and inspection was more than sufficient and, with the appointment of a Deputy Director of Public Instruction in special charge of Elementary Education, the time had come for the abolition of the Directorship of Public Instruction and placing the whole department under a competent Secretariat Officer in the Huzur Office.

The Public Works Department, the Member contended, was overstaffed. One Executive Engineer could be diverted to the Agricultural Department as Agricultural Engineer and asked to work in collaboration with the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries to examine and report to Government about the real condition of the hundreds of irrigation tanks which had become useless on account of various causes and the measures necessary to restore them. He could also help the department to instal machinery and pumps in several places and thus reclaim vast areas which were lying fallow. The various works connected with roads and their maintenance could be separated from building works, so that the people might be benefited to a larger extent than they were now. Another matter to which attention might be usefully directed was the allotment of public funds, which was not satisfactory now. Those who were further away from the capital at present got only a very small share.

With a view to remove the above defects, the Member suggested the creation of an Efficiency Audit Department as in Mysore and defined the following as its main functions :—

(1) Preparing schemes for new departments and reorganizing existing departments ;

(2) Maintaining all the departments on a uniform level of efficiency and purity ;

(3) Finding out the causes of defects, whether due to the *personnel* of the departments or the system of work, and devising necessary remedies ;

(4) Preventing the great delay in the disposal of business;

(5) Making Administrative Audit more effective ;

(6) Inquiring into charges of corruption and reporting them to the Head of the Department or to the Government ; and

(7) Preparation of Statistics.

Dewan's reply.—The Member's speech is very interesting. The several suggestions made by him will be carefully noted for consideration.

2. Need for increased allotment of public funds to rural areas, especially for communications, and for the creation of local bodies, at least one in each taluk, to make suggestions in respect of local needs.

Mr. C. P. Thomas, B. A., L. T. (Member, Nominated) said that one of the defects of Government in India before the advent of the British was that public funds were mostly spent in capital cities to the great prejudice of localities in rural areas. He quoted the present Bishop of Travancore and Cochin, who had publicly given expression to his view that, unlike other Native States in Northern India, the condition of the villages in Travancore was far more satisfactory. Though a good deal had been done in Travancore in pushing forward the interests of the rural population, much more remained to be done. He was not of the opinion that the revenues collected from a particular Division or Taluk should be utilized for such area alone. The objective of Government ought, no doubt, to be the welfare of the whole State. But, in carrying out that general principle, the Government should try to maintain a fair proportion between the contribution of local areas to the public funds and the expenditure from the same. Though the expenditure on public works throughout the various Divisions was not well distributed about 12 years ago, the same could not be said now. On the representations of the various Members of the Assembly at its successive sessions, a greater degree of fair distribution had been attained. Still, the needs of several taluks had not yet received the consideration

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